

The THOREAU SOCIETY

BULLETIN

BULLETIN ONE HUNDRED THIRTY-ONE

U S I S S N 0040 - 6406

Spring 1975

"EARLY REVIEWS OF WALDEN BY THE ALTA CALIFORNIA AND ITS 'LADY CORRESPONDENT'" by James H. Matlack
(Univ. of Mass.)

During the 1850's San Francisco developed as the cultural and literary center of the American West with astonishing rapidity. In a mere half-decade after the Gold Rush of 1849, the ramshackle town became a burgeoning city with an impressive array of cultural institutions--numerous schools, a college, libraries, an art association, free universal education, and more newspapers than New York or London. (See Franklin Walker's San Francisco's Literary Frontier, New York, 1939) Despite rough frontier circumstances, these papers had a sufficiently educated audience in the cosmopolitan, shifting population of the city and the region that some attention was paid to reviews of new books as well as pirated publication of literary extracts. The appearance of Thoreau's Walden could be expected to attract the attention of such trans-continental reviews.

Less predictable was the means by which the leading newspaper in San Francisco kept its readers up-to-date on literary and cultural matters. The Alta California was a direct descendant of the earliest paper to appear regularly in California. It began as the Californian in Monterey on August 15, 1846, then merged with the California Star and moved to San Francisco in 1849. Under the aggressive editorship of Edward Kemble the Alta California became and remained perhaps the city's most important newspaper until well after the Civil War. The Alta was conspicuous in the flourishing literary culture of San Francisco which "produced an interesting school of journalism that formed the tastes and methods of several writers later to attain prominent positions in American letters," (Walker, vii) such writers as Mark Twain, Bret Harte, Ambrose Bierce, Joaquin Miller, and Henry George. (In 1867 the Alta California financed Twain's journey to Europe and the Holy Lands in return for a series of travel letters published in San Francisco which in collected form later became The Innocents Abroad.) These Western authors and their fame came later,

however. In 1854 the Alta California signed on a young woman in New York City to write a series of bi-monthly cultural newsletters which soon ran under the title "FROM OUR LADY CORRESPONDENT."

Elizabeth Barstow Stoddard (1823-1902) was literally an unknown author when she made the agreement with the Alta to provide two columns each month at a rate of \$12 per newsletter.* Born in 1823 on the shores of Buzzards Bay in Mattapoisett, Massachusetts, Elizabeth grew up in a coastal village heavily under the influence of Puritan religious traditions and primarily devoted to ship-building and sea trades. Her father ran the largest ship-yard in town where most vessels launched in the mid-1800's were whaleships for the growing fleet sailing from nearby New Bedford. The Barstow yard built the Acushnet on which Melville sailed in 1841. Elizabeth received some formal schooling but largely educated herself through reading on her own. In 1852 she married Richard Henry Stoddard, an aspiring young poet and critic. The Stoddards moved to New York City where they lived and wrote for the next fifty years. Prompted by their poverty, under the tutelage and provocation of her husband, Elizabeth set out to become an author. She had managed, however, only one recorded published item prior to taking on the role of "Lady Correspondent" for the Alta California.

Although Elizabeth Stoddard commented upon Walden in her first column, a reviewer on the Alta staff beat her to the topic. The Daily Alta California of 23 September 1854 (V, 264) included a section of "New Book Notices . . . Messers LeCount and Strong have received the following new books per steamer California." Among the brief notices were paragraphs on Dickens' Hard Times, Ruskin's Lectures on Architecture and Painting, and:

Walden: or Life in the Woods. By Henry D. Thoreau. Boston: Ticknor and Fields.

This is a very strange book, the history of a philosopher living in the woods, a sort of Robinson Crusoe life. It shows the simplicity with which life can be conducted, stripped of some of its conventionalities, and the whole narrative is imbued with a deep philosophic spirit. Altogether besides being beautifully written, it has an air of originality which is quite taking. We commend it to our readers.

Two and a half weeks earlier, on September 5, Mrs. Stoddard was writing her "Letter From A Lady Correspondent" in New York City. Her completed copy was sent by steamer to Nicaragua, then overland by train to the Pacific, finally by steamer up the coast to San Francisco. The piece appeared in the Daily Alta California for 8 October 1854 (V, 279) on page 2. "This being my first essay to establish myself in the columns of your paper as one of 'our own,' I debate in my mind how to appear most effectively, whether to present myself as a genuine original, or adopt some great example in style; such as the pugilism of Fanny Fern, the pathetics of Minnie Myrtle, or the abandon of Cassie Cauliflower." Elizabeth Stoddard felt herself in competition with the same tribe of leafy-named female writers that Hawthorne angrily called a "damned mob of scribbling women." The Lady Correspondent staked out her own territory and method--"I conclude not to attempt the ornate at present, but to send you letters containing facts and opinions." She discussed the social and cultural scene in New York City, then turned to books. A volume by a personal friend, Bayard Taylor's Journey to Central Africa, received first attention. She also reviewed Dickens' Hard Times, N. P. Willis' Famous Persons and Places, and Captain Canot, or Twenty Years of an African Cruiser, edited by Brante Mayer.

If my limits would allow, the Book I would most like to expatiate upon, would be Thoreau's Walden, or Life in the Woods, published by Ticknor and Fields, Boston. It is the result of a two or three years' sojourn in the woods, and it is a most minute history of Thoreau's external life, and internal speculation. It is the latest effervescence of the peculiar school, at the head of which stands Ralph Waldo Emerson. Of Walden, Emerson says, that Thoreau has cornered nature in it. Several years ago Thoreau sought the freedom of the woods, and built him a little house with his two hands, on the margin of Walden Pond, near Concord, Massachusetts. There he contemplated, on "cornered" nature, and hoed beans, determined, as he said, to know them. Notwithstanding an apparent contempt for utility, he seems a sharp accountant, and not a little interest is attached to his bills of expense, they are so ludicrously small. Coarse bread, occasional molasses and rice, now and then a fish taken from Walden Pond, and philosophically matured vegetables, (he sold his beans) were his fare. His ideas of beauty are positive, but limited. The world of art is beyond his wisdom. Individualism is the altar at which he worships. Philanthropy is an opposite term, and he does not scruple to affirm that Philanthropy and he are two. The book is full of talent, curious and interesting. I recommend it as a study to all fops, male and female.

If Elizabeth Stoddard belittled Thoreau's artistry in Walden, she did grasp the significance of his gesture and the force of his example. She also read at least the opening chapter of Walden closely enough to quote directly from it in her next newsletter (published 22 October 1854). Speaking of women's fashions, she wrote, "We monkeyfy ourselves after the 'head monkey at Paris,' . . . while the male representative of 'Young America' dresses himself after the English foggy style." There are no other direct references to Thoreau or Walden in the 85 columns from the Alta's Lady Correspondent which appeared regularly until early 1858.

Mrs. Stoddard outgrew and rejected her rigorous

early training in New England Calvinism but she retained a deep, Puritan-like skepticism toward enthusiasts or programmatic reformers of all kinds. This seems to be the image she had of Thoreau and of Transcendentalists generally. As the review of Walden suggests, she was most responsive to social satire and critique in the book rather than its philosophical, naturalist, or literary/symbolic aspects. The same disposition and response is evident in Elizabeth Stoddard's comments about Emerson, the man she took to be Thoreau's mentor. She heard Emerson lecture in New York several times and told her California readers that she was particularly impressed with "The Conduct of Life."

Fine society, he says, is an "unprincipled decorum." I wish I could remember better what he said. Fifth Avenue and West End were sarcastically snubbed. I felt ashamed of the longings I sometimes have for diamonds and ear-rings, and the stepping-on-your-toes airs which so many fine ladies possess. I inwardly prayed that no mortal might ever discover my weakness. Alas! innate dignity goes such a very little ways in this world! We worship accessories, not facts.

(Daily Alta California, 22 March 1857)

Paralleling her evaluation of Thoreau, Mrs. Stoddard noted a problem which bedeviled the sage: "Emerson is the only literary nobleman I know of. He despises the masses as much as he does fine society." She again portrayed him as an uncommon man in her otherwise favorable review of English Traits.

*For more information, see "The Alta California's Lady Correspondent" New York Historical Society Quarterly, LVIII, #4 (October 1974), pp. 280-303 and James H. Matlack, "The Literary Career of Elizabeth Barstow Stoddard (1823-1902)" (Ph.D. diss., Yale University, 1967), available on microfilm.

THOREAU ON VIOLENCE by William A. Herr (Loyola Univ.)

Henry Thoreau is generally considered one of this country's foremost apostles of non-violence. The story of his arrest for refusing to pay a tax in support of the Mexican War of 1846 is part of the folklore of American non-violent resistance; his characterization of soldiers in the essay "Civil Disobedience" as "small movable forts and magazines, at the service of some unscrupulous man in power.... They have the same sort of worth only as horses and dogs"¹ seems to reflect a resolutely pacifist viewpoint.

It is hardly surprising, therefore, that commentators have always found it difficult to reconcile this rejection of violence with Thoreau's immediate and whole-hearted defense of John Brown, whose attempt to stir up a slave revolt could easily have touched off an orgy of inter-racial bloodletting and cost tens of thousands of innocent lives.

How can this apparently sudden "conversion to violence as a legitimate means in the social conflict,"² this "new conception of force to meet force,"³ as critics have called it, be explained? Some have pointed to a change in the political circumstances, contending that "the author of 'Civil Disobedience,' faced with a new and desperate situation, had come to realize that passive resistance was not enough."⁴ Others have offered psychological explanations, suggesting, for example, that Brown satisfied Thoreau's life-long search for a father-substitute.⁵

There is, however, a far simpler explanation: disconcerting as it may be to non-violent followers of Thoreau, the evidence seems overwhelming that the author of "Civil Disobedience" never rejected violence

in principle, and thus that his defense of John Brown represents a continuation, not an abandonment, of his lifelong position on the issue.

It is true that Walden contains the comment "Only the defeated and deserters go to the wars, cowards that run away and enlist"⁶ and that Thoreau called the prospect of war between England and the United States "a desperate step."⁷ Likewise, when visiting Quebec in 1850 he observed that "It is impossible to give the soldier a good education, without making him a deserter"⁸ and suggested that the city's fortifications were more of a burden than a protection: "Of course, if they had no walls, they would not need to have any sentinals."⁹

But when civil war appeared imminent in his own country, Thoreau wished only that the northern states "had more spirit and would settle the question at once"¹⁰ and wrote, "I do not believe that the North will soon come to blows with the South on this [slavery] question. It would be too bright a page to be written in the history of the race at present."¹¹ Once war was declared, according to F. B. Sanborn, who had known Thoreau personally, "he was as earnest as any one that it should be fought to its just conclusion, the destruction of slavery."¹²

Thoreau's basic objection to war apparently was that it usually was senseless, not that it was violent. In fact, the idea of violent combat in itself seems rather to have appealed to him.

Emerson, for example, did not hesitate to describe Thoreau as "somewhat military in his attitude,"¹³ and Sanborn recalled that "Although less inclined, as he grew older, to use the language of campaigns and battlefields, Thoreau never quite gave up this belligerent attitude."¹⁴

In 1839, when he was 22, Thoreau wrote that "Men have made war from a deeper instinct than peace"¹⁵ and "We do all stand in the front ranks of the battle every moment of our lives; where there is a brave man there is the thickest of the fight, there is the post of honor."¹⁶ The following year he declared, "I have a deep sympathy with war, it so apes the gait and bearing of the soul."¹⁷

Thoreau's 1840 essay "The Service," one of the first pieces he wrote for publication, compared "the hearty good will and activity of war" to "the insincerity and sloth of peace,"¹⁸ asserted that "it is that friendship there is in war that makes it chivalrous and heroic,"¹⁹ and declared that "It is not enough that our life is an easy one; we must live on the stretch, retiring to our rest like soldiers on the eve of a battle, looking forward with ardour to the strenuous sortie of the morrow.... We too are dwellers within the purlieus of the camp. When the sun breaks through the morning mist, I seem to hear the din of war louder than when his chariot thundered on the plains of Troy."²⁰

In his biographical sketch of Sir Walter Raleigh, of whom he wrote that "perhaps no one in English history better represents the heroic character,"²¹ Thoreau observed that "If war was his earnest work, it was his pastime too"²² and "He makes us doubt if there is not some worthier apology for war than has been discovered, for its modes and manners were an instinct with him."²³ The book concludes with the sentence, "In our lonely chambers at night we are thrilled by some far-off serenade within the mind, and seem to hear the clarion sound and clang of corselet and buckler from many a silent hamlet of the soul, though actually it may be but the rattling of some farmer's wagon rolling to market against the

morrow."²⁴

When composing a short essay in praise of Wendell Phillips, Thoreau went out of his way to attribute to the abolitionist a "soldier-like steadfastness"²⁵ and, in rather far-fetched imagery, declared, "For as yet the Red-cross knight has shown us only the gallant device upon his shield, and his admirable command of his steed, prancing and curvetting in the empty lists; but we wait to see who, in the actual breaking of lances, will come tumbling upon the plain."²⁶ Strange phrases, these, for a pacifist.

Even Thoreau's arrest for nonpayment of taxes, widely considered a classic example of resistance to war, was nothing of the sort: contrary to his own implication in "Civil Disobedience," he actually stopped paying the tax in question two years before the Mexican War even began.²⁷ When discussing his imprisonment Thoreau observed that he "might have resisted forcibly with more or less effect, might have run 'amok' against society;" he simply "preferred" not to.²⁸ "Civil Disobedience" itself, although it has been included in many pacifist anthologies, asks pointedly, "But even suppose blood should flow. Is there not a sort of blood shed when the conscience is wounded?"²⁹

Later, in "Slavery in Massachusetts," Thoreau declared that "If we would save our lives we must fight for them"³⁰ and "Show me a free state, and a court truly of justice, and I will fight for them, if need be."³¹ This essay, in fact, was written to defend men being held on murder charges after a violent attack on a Boston courthouse during which an officer of the law had been killed.

It seems clear, then, that when Thoreau wrote in 1859 concerning John Brown, "I do not complain of any tactics that are effective of good, whether one wields the quill or the sword.... I will judge the tactics by the fruits"³² he was not abandoning any former pacifism. The issue of whether to use violent or peaceful means to combat injustice seems to have been for Thoreau far more a problem of choosing the more effective technique than a matter of moral principle. "The question," as he put it, "is not about the weapon, but the spirit in which you use it."³³

NOTES: ¹The Writings of Henry D. Thoreau: Reform Papers, ed. by Wendell Glick (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1973), pp. 65-66. ²Heinz Eulau, "Wayside Challenger," Antioch Review, IX (1949), p. 521. ³Henry Seidel Canby, Thoreau (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1939), p. 392. ⁴Charles A. Madison, "Henry David Thoreau: Transcendental Individualist," Ethics, LIV (1944), p. 119. ⁵Carl Bode, "The Half Hidden Thoreau," Massachusetts Review, IV (1962), p. 71-72. ⁶The Writings of Henry D. Thoreau: Walden, ed. by J. Lyndon Shanley (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1971), p. 322. ⁷The Journal of Henry D. Thoreau, ed. by Bradford Torrey and Francis H. Allen (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1949), VIII, p. 189. ⁸Quebec and Montmorenci, The Writings of Henry David Thoreau, ed. by Bradford Torrey and Franklin Benjamin Sanborn (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1906), V, p. 27. ⁹"The Walls of Quebec," Writings, V, p. 80. ¹⁰The Correspondence of Henry D. Thoreau, ed. by Walter Harding and Carl Bode (New York: N. Y. Univ. Press, 1958), p. 436. ¹¹Journal, II, p. 174. ¹²Sanborn, "Introduction" to Thoreau's Sir Walter Raleigh (Boston: The Bibliographic Society, 1905), p. 12. ¹³Thoreau, The Selected Writings of Ralph Waldo Emerson, ed. by Brooks Atkinson (New York: Random House, 1950), p. 897. ¹⁴Sanborn, op. cit., pp. 8-9. ¹⁵Journal, I, p. 100. ¹⁶Ibid., p. 96. ¹⁷Ibid., p. 154. ¹⁸Reform Papers, p. 17. ¹⁹Ibid., p. 9. ²⁰Ibid., p. 14. ²¹Sir Walter Raleigh, p. 17. ²²Ibid., p. 25. ²³Ibid., p. 22. ²⁴Ibid., p. 90.

²⁵Reform Papers, p. 61. ²⁶Ibid., p. 62. ²⁷John C. Broderick, "Thoreau, Alcott and the Poll Tax," Studies in Philology, v.53 (1959), p. 625. ²⁸Walden, p. 171. ²⁹Reform Papers, p. 77. ³⁰Ibid., p. 108. ³¹Ibid., p. 106. ³²Journal, XII, p. 417. ³³Ibid., p. 422 and "A Plea for Captain John Brown," Reform Papers, p. 133.

THOREAU & RICHARD BAXTER by Morton Berkowitz
(Trent Univ.)

In the "Conclusion" chapter of Walden Thoreau declares: "I desire to speak somewhere without bounds; like a man in a waking moment, to men in their waking moments; for I am convinced that I cannot exaggerate enough even to lay the foundation of a true expression."¹ Here, as elsewhere in Walden, Thoreau uses the image of wakefulness as a metaphor for increased spiritual awareness. In the present case, however, the image assumes an additional significance when seen as a rhetorical inversion of a well-known phrase from Richard Baxter's Autobiography (1696), a classic of English Puritan writing and a popular work among generations of New Englanders.

In recounting the history of his ministry among the country folk of Kidderminster, Baxter states: "One advantage was that I came to a people that never had any awakening ministry before....Another was that...doing all in bodily weakness, as a dying man, my soul was the more easily brought to seriousness, and to preach as a dying man to dying men...."² (My italics)

It appears that in characterizing himself as a "man in a waking moment" talking to "men in their waking moments," Thoreau is hearkening back to the earlier writer's rhetoric. This conjecture is strengthened by the fact that in the two passages quoted both authors are concerned with the question of "the foundation of a true expression." In contrast with the sometimes melancholy Baxter, however, Thoreau typically places the emphasis on living ("waking"), rather than "dying"; hence the rhetorical twist.

NOTES: ¹Henry David Thoreau, Walden: The Variorum Edition, ed. Walter Harding (N.V., 1962), p. 260.

²Richard Baxter, The Autobiography of Richard Baxter, ed. Ernest Rhys (London, 1931), p. 79. Cf. p. 26 where Baxter uses the same phrase in a slightly different context.

ALLEGASH - 1974 by Frederic W. Braun

Of all the places Thoreau visited and wrote about, the Allegash area has probably changed the least since he last was there in July and August of 1857. The Concord and Merrimack Rivers would probably be unrecognizable if he were to see them now. The Cape Cod area too, must be subjected to "development." The Walden Area is heavily over used. Yet we found in the Allegash, despite the inroads of civilization, parts along Thoreau's excursion little changed from the conditions he described 117 years ago.

In the first week in August my companion and I traveled by canoe over a small portion of Thoreau's 1857 excursion which he described in "Allegash and the East Branch." We would have liked to have followed the entire route from Moosehead Lake through the East Branch, but we had limited time - 5 days. Our outfitter said that Moosehead was too developed and out of the wilderness area to be anywhere like what it was in Thoreau's time. My age (23 years

older than Thoreau at the time of his journey) and the fact we had no Indian guide, both suggested that the carries be eliminated. We settled on a trip from a tourist landing on Telos Lake, Round Pond (called Telasinis in Thoreau's account) and Chamberlain Lake ("another noble lake - even the English name of the lake had a wild woodland sound") and then back to our landing. Our man from the Allegash Wilderness Outfitters assured us that the further north we went the more untouched would be our country and so it was.

The landing had an area where campers and car trailers were parked. Some of them were canoeists' cars, but some of the occupants apparently were going to spend their entire vacation in the parking lot, taking only short trips along the south shore of Telos Lake in the motor boats they had hauled many miles for just this pleasure.

We paddled on and made our first camp, still in Telos. Our campsites, by the rules of the State of Maine, could only be at designated places. So we were not put to Thoreau's task of trying several landings for suitable campings. We did have trouble with wet wood for a fire as did Indian Joe Polis. Lacking a guide I made the fire using old fir branches for tinder, while my companion took over the cooking duties. Our fare was in the main dehydrated foods, along with peanut butter, canned chicken and corned beef, several loaves of bread, instant coffee, tea, cocoa. There were no pork casks to haul. It wasn't necessary that we fashion our own tent pins, or cut boughs for our bedding. We did, to add fragrance to our tent, strew balsam and cedar twigs in our tent between the foam pads and the sleeping bags. And we took whiskey along lest we entirely forget our civilized ties.

The first night our tent was pitched in a meadow above the lake, a rainy misty evening. The no-see-ums and mosquitoes that Thoreau resisted with nets and "anointing of faces and hands" were still with us but our modern repellants seemed reasonably effective. A boy scout troop, the first of several we would see on our trip, shared our camp. The larger group required a sort of military discipline to function and move, hence I am sure they were not able to engage in the leisurely contemplation of their surroundings in the fashion of Thoreau and which we were trying to relive.

We awoke the next morning hearing the white throated sparrow which Thoreau had mentioned so often on his trip. We were to hear the same song many times in the next few days. "A-te-te-te-te - a very inspiring but almost wiry sound, - so sharp and piercing." It is hard to verbalize the song of a bird. When I was very young and heard the same notes in the Wisconsin woods, a woman told me it was an A-B-C-D bird. Now when I hear a white throated sparrow, I can still imagine, after many years, a little school girl reciting the alphabet in her high-pitched voice. The boy scouts had already left, very quietly, for we did not hear them, and no doubt with precision and by the numbers.

In paddling to Chamberlain Lake which we reached by the next afternoon, we passed a shore in Round Pond which could be described as Thoreau did a further shore on Chamberlain (Apmoojenegamook): "a perfect maze of submerged trees all dead and bare and bleaching, some standing half their original height, others prostrate, and criss-across." We made the required registration at the ranger station at the narrows at the entrance of Chamberlain. From then on, for several days, we would see no other dwellings save the Chamberlain farm across the lake from where we would be. Thoreau visited the farm on his trip to replenish his supply of sugar, depleted mainly by Polis's sweet tooth.

The Chamberlain Farm was the only clearing in Thoreau's

time and still is. The shores of Chamberlain are wooded and wild. As Thoreau described Moosehead, we saw on Chamberlain "the boundless forest undulating away from its shores on every side, as densely packed as a rye-field." At our second night's camp we had a thunderstorm, and like Thoreau's tent, ours "leaked considerably." Instead of listening to the "grandest thunder - rapid peals round and plump" we read aloud by flashlight, in turn, Thoreau's account of the carry by which he reached Chamberlain. We were to read aloud two more nights and thus, vicariously, travel those portions of his trip which we had omitted.

As we proceeded along the northwest shore, of Chamberlain, we saw ducks and ducklings bobbing on the waters, loons who sometimes gave their wild eerie cries, herons clumsily taking off near shore, gulls soaring on the wind and up drafts, Canada jays in our camp. We made lunch stops on rocky points, on grassy beaches. Paddling a canoe on a lake like Chamberlain, as my companion said, had a cadence all of its own and a beauty of rhythm second only to walking along a woodland trail. On coming into camp in late afternoon we would seek a secluded cove for an afternoon swim, a luxury which Thoreau did not seem to indulge in very often.

On the morning in which we were to return south, the wind came up quite briskly, raising waves and causing conditions which Thoreau encountered several times on his trip. A group of scouts had shared our camp, and some took advantage of the wind by lashing 2 or 3 canoes together, paddling well away from shore and then letting out their tent canvasses whose ends had been tied to the bows of the canoes. The billowing bright orange sails as they filled out in the wind made a beautiful sight. We started out much later, the wind had gotten stronger and we found out what Thoreau had described - that we could not ride the waves at right angles or we would be swamped. We thought we were following the shore, but between quartering the waves and the drifting with the wind, we crossed the lake to come into the Arm of Chamberlain. We landed on a rocky shore in a heavy surf not knowing then where we were. We stayed several hours at this spot trying to drag the canoe along the shore but the surf and rocks made that impossible. We tried walking the woods near shore but the uncut tangled growth and windfalls made progress slow. We returned to the canoe and as it was then late afternoon, we hoped that the waves would begin to subside so we decided to try again. We shipped water taking off and found in following the shore as best we could that we were going in a northeasterly direction (as the Arm was described by Thoreau) and concluded we were indeed in the Arm. We turned around and by dusk found a small bay where we landed and slept in wet bags under the sky. We got up at dawn to paddle to our rendezvous with our outfitter about 8 miles away.

I have been in wilder places and more primitive, but Thoreau and his account of his travel there makes the Allegash unique. For a few short days we had reduced our living to the basics described by Thoreau. The fact that he had done the same over a century ago in almost the same surroundings gave us a sense of time standing still.

WILLIAM HOWARTH by Thomas Blanding

William L. Howarth, current President of the Thoreau Society and Editor-in-Chief of The Writings of Henry D. Thoreau, should have been born a Yankee,

being as it were a born Concordian. He is, in fact, an uprooted mid-westerner from Springfield, Illinois, transplanted to Princeton University where he is a popular Associate Professor of English.

Professor Howarth has traveled a good deal in Concord, first in imagination, later along Thoreau's footpaths in Easterbrook Woods. A preeminent Thoreau scholar, he concluded long ago that the best way to know Thoreau's writings, especially the Journal, would be to plant himself in Concord ground and watch the progress of the seasons from a Thoreauvian perch. To this end, the Howarths dwelt during 1972-73 on Nawshawtuct Hill not far from Thoreau's boat landing on the river. From this lodge on the side of the hill, perhaps where a woodchuck had formerly dug his burrow, the Professor daily sallied into Thoreau's woods (and occasionally into Concord library) determined to know something more than beans about Thoreau's environs.

Two years later, at Princeton's Thoreau's Textual Center, Professor Howarth applies this knowledge to editing Thoreau's writings. For example, in restoring the unpublished "Moonlight" lecture, he discovers the proper sequence of the disordered leaves because Thoreau wrote a lecture as a progressive excursion to recognizable Concord localities. The desk-bound editor who had never explored Thoreau country could not have known that Bear Garden Hill leads on to Fair Haven, on to Conantum, and so way on to way.

Professor Howarth's Thoreau publications include The Literary Manuscripts of Henry David Thoreau, A Thoreau Gazetteer (with Robert Stowell) and several articles. At present besides his editorial work on Princeton's twenty-five volume Thoreau Edition, he is writing a description of the Robert H. Taylor Thoreau collection and a book-length study of Thoreau's Journal. The Professor is not a partisan Thoreauvian, however, having published books and articles on Crane, Poe and the principles of autobiography.

Now if only he were a Yankee too!

THE 1975 ANNUAL MEETING

The annual meeting of the Thoreau Society will be held in the First Parish Church in Concord, Mass., on Saturday, July 12, 1975. Coffee will be served in the parlor from 9 to 10 a.m. The business meeting, chaired by the president will begin at 10:15 a.m. Speaker of the Day will be Annie Dillard, author of Pilgrim at Tinker Creek. William Howarth will deliver the presidential address.

Luncheon will be served at 12:45. Tickets may be purchased from Mrs. Charles D. MacPherson, 46 Nagog Hill Road, Acton, Mass., 01720 for \$3.75. Deadline, July 8.

The afternoon program will consist of specially arranged tours of the Thoreau-Alcott House on Main Street; the Fruitlands Museum in Harvard, Mass.; the Concord Free Public Library; Walden Pond; and Sleepy Hollow Cemetery.

The Thoreau Lyceum will hold its annual box supper at 6:00 p.m., preceded by a sherry party and exhibition at 5:00. Tickets for the supper must be ordered from the Lyceum at 156 Belknap Street at \$2.25. Deadline, July 8. Please make checks payable to "The Thoreau Foundation."

The evening program at 8:00 at the First Parish Church will include a showing of the BBC TV film on Thoreau.

Those who arrive in Concord on Friday the 11th are invited to hear a lecture by Prof. George Hendrick of the University of Illinois on "Dr. Samuel Arthur Jones, Thoreauvian Scholar" at the Thoreau Lyceum at 8:30 p.m. Since seating is limited, advance reservations would be appreciated.

THE ANNUAL ELECTION

The nominating committee, Mary Gail Fenn, William H. Harrison, and Thomas Blanding, Chairman, have submitted the following slate of officers for election at the annual meeting for terms of one year: President, Eugene Walker of Concord; President-elect, W. Stephen Thomas of Rochester, N.Y.; Vice-president, Patience MacPherson of Acton, Mass.; Secretary-treasurer, Walter Harding of Geneseo, N.Y.; and for terms of three years on the executive committee, Carol Orr of Princeton, N.J. and Linda Beaulieu of Holcomb, N.Y. Further nominations may be made from the floor at the annual meeting.

Any proposals for the agenda of the 1975 meeting should be submitted to the secretary in writing before July 8.

A REPORT FROM WALDEN POND by Mary Gail Fenn

Editor's Note: The Walden Pond Reservation was taken over by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts from the Middlesex County Commissioners and work was started immediately on restoring and improving conditions there. We are grateful for this bulletin from Fuzzy Fenn dated March 30, 1975.

What they have accomplished thus far is an unbelievable improvement. The boulder with the plaque is gone. The cairn, which to everyone's surprise turned out to be a pile of earth and gravel and other rubble dumped on the spot with a covering of boulders and smaller rocks, has been moved fifteen or twenty feet to the left of the house site (as you stand with your back to the pond). The eroded gully of a path that came down off the back hill has been filled in and will have good soil spread over it so as to discontinue the path and give the whole area more of an amphitheater effect. The plateau on which the house was built (the soil dug out of the banking above) has been built up higher. The benches have been removed. Roland Robbins has begun to do some selective thinning of the trees so that not only will the area be more open but a fine vista of the pond will open up. Visitors to the cairn now look up the trail and see the hut site...not two or three memorials which hide the site as did the cairn and boulder. Roland's plans for the Bean Field are to plant pines on or at each stump in order to mark the original tree sites. Various dates are suitable for adding to the plantings--April 19, July 4, etc. He may plant a couple of trees in the to-be-discontinued-path to discourage traffic. They can be moved later.

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CURRENT THOREAU LITERATUREWH

William Randel's two cassettes are excellent discussions of Thoreau aimed for a college audience. "Civil Disobedience" is particularly good on the influence of other thinkers on Thoreau and on the effective use of civil disobedience today; "Thoreau and the Middle Landscape" expands on Leo Marx's idea of Thoreau's trying to achieve a balance between civilization and wildness. . . . Mary Fenn's OLD HOUSES OF CONCORD is a useful guide to and history of the old houses of Concord (including a number once occupied by Thoreau) and incidentally a compendium of amusing Concord anecdotes such as Mary Moody Emerson sitting on a rooftop awaiting a Second Coming Although John McPhee's article is primarily on the modern manufacture of birch bark

canoes, it includes many comments on Thoreau and a re-tracing of his MAINE WOODS excursions. It's fascinating reading "Euell Gibbons Is not Henry David Thoreau," but the recording of that name is without question my favorite of all the available recordings of readings from Thoreau. It is a series of the choicest quotations from HDT read in Gibbons' strong woodsy voice with appropriate musical background. Order from Walden III, Box 75, Limerick, Pa. . . . John Cage's "Empty Words," perhaps one of the most unusual bits of Thoreauviana in some time, is an I Ching-selected collection of words, phrases and drawings from Thoreau's Journal . . . Woodson's "Notes" runs down a number of allusions and quotations that have eluded all previous editions of WALDEN Herr's essay asserts that civil disobedience as popularly defined today is quite different from what Thoreau advocated And the Sperry article is a hitherto unpublished account by one of Thoreau's fellow passengers on the 1861 trip up the Minnesota River.

MORE DOCTORAL DISSERTATIONS ON THOREAU.

With the permission of the University Microfilms of Ann Arbor, Mich., we continue printing herewith reproductions of abstracts of dissertations on Thoreau. The full dissertations are available from University Microfilms at the prices given at the ends of the abstracts:

HENRY DAVID THOREAU'S IDEAS FOR SELF-EDUCATION OF THE INDIVIDUAL AS EXPRESSED IN HIS JOURNAL, 1837-1862.
(Order No. 62-1857)

Franklin Willard Hamilton, Ed.D.
University of Kansas, 1961

Chairman: Professor Oscar M. Haugh

The primary material of this study was the personal Journal of Thoreau which he kept for twenty-five years from his graduation at Harvard in 1837 to his death in 1862. Throughout his writing career Thoreau delineated the belief that an individual could achieve self-education if he were aware and receptive to certain basic influences.

Chapter I is a bibliographical introduction to Thoreau sources. Thoreau's relationship to Hawthorne, Whitman, Emerson, and other minor personalities of his age is discussed in Chapter II, and Thoreau's basic educational views and how some of these ideas were conceived and expressed are discussed in Chapter III.

Chapter IV first shows how Thoreau stressed the influences of accurate observations of nature and social events, and personal awareness of real experiences in one's immediate environment as important factors in directing creative thinking. Next, how Thoreau accepted the power of nature as a catharsis in provoking personal realization is presented. Then the chapter is concluded with a restatement of the importance which Thoreau placed upon the necessity of leisure in one's life in order for contemplation and thinking to function in personal growth.

The next chapter treats the value which Thoreau placed upon the individual's developing skill in written expression as a major influence in achieving true self-expression. He believed practice in written expression, controlled by clarity in thinking, would lead to growth in one's ability to arrive at self-criticism. He stressed preciseness and exactness of vocabulary. He believed one could express best his immediate environment and personal experiences;

he further stressed the idea of writing often, re-writing, and developing the ability to be critical of the thoughts which provoked the expression as well as the actual written work. Thoreau believed poetry to be the closest thing to complete truth, and he stressed the responsibility of the poet to report his observations, experiences, and emotions accurately. Nothing is to be more sought after by the individual than skill to achieve true expression in writing.

The last chapter contains a discussion of three forces which influence one's self-education. First, Thoreau believed that personal moral strength would allow one to admit mistakes, re-evaluate personal effort, and attempt intellectual explorations with energy and confidence. Next, he believed mysticism to be an intuitive force in one's search for knowledge and awareness; an awareness of mysticism helps one to find his place in the universe. Last, he believed that one who is seeking self-education would display faith in mankind which would allow the individual to come nearer his total realization.

Microfilm \$2.75; Xerox \$7.60. 165 pages.

"THE ECCENTRIC ORBIT": DIMENSIONS OF THE ARTISTIC PROCESS IN HENRY DAVID THOREAU'S MAJOR WRITINGS

(Order No. 70-11,337)

Robert James DEMOTT Ph.D.
Kent State University, 1969

Director: Howard P. Vincent

Thoreau's numerous perceptive comments about the constitution and dimensions of his own aesthetic sensibility, his awareness that conscious and unconscious aspects of creativity are interwoven, and his preoccupation with the general nature of literary art and artistry, all reveal the primacy artistic creation assumed in his life. For Thoreau the major man, "the man of greatest and rarest vigor," is undeniably the poet, the literary maker, who "can deal with his thoughts as a material, building them into poems." An examination of the artistic process by which Thoreau's works are brought into existence forms the substance of this dissertation.

By attending to Thoreau's two "meta-novels," *A Week on the Concord and Merrimack Rivers* and *Walden*, and by drawing upon his poetry, his *Journal*, and his minor prose works for additional substantiation, I analyze the three most important facets of Thoreau's artistic process: (I) the theoretic process of artistic creation that constitutes the generative act which Thoreau continually speaks about in *A Week* and *Walden*, for instance, in analogous terms of a cycle with a destructive and purifying phase, followed by a process of re-creation and construction; (II) the revelation of the creative process in his works which is manifested in four related threads of the process, namely, 1) that the poet or artist is always at the center of his artistic construct, 2) that "Poetry is the subject of the poem," as Wallace Stevens writes, 3) that narration should be viewed as a dynamic process which reveals the depth and intensity of Thoreau's engagement with life, and 4) that the journey Thoreau concerns himself with in *A Week* for example, is a symbolistic and metaphoric journey of the self as "I" that employs exploration as a mode of existence; and (III) the use and development of the circle and its variants—the orbit, sphere, and cycle—which not only describe the cyclical phases of psychic annihilation and subsequent re-creation in the artist's mind, but also provide the major structural principle for the greatest portion of Thoreau's prose.

The process of poetic creation is for Thoreau a process of discovery and unfolding carried on by a sensitive and acute artistic mind immersing itself in the flux of life, attempting to fix as well as possible through art the ceaselessly changing nature of reality. In his acts of creation the compositions Thoreau forms around him become dynamic configurations which result from his continual response to the multiplicity of sensory impressions and recollections that condition and create each moment of experience. Thoreau's goal in his meta-novels is to repeat the endlessly fertile rhythms of a keen and receptive consciousness in its engagement with the confluence of natural and artificial things of its world. In reading *Walden* and the *Week* the reader must be aware that the activity of creation, the activity of the mind

mind engaged in perception, and the activity of giving those perceptions commensurate linguistic expression, are themselves the subjects of Thoreau's works.

M \$4.40 X \$15.55 341 pages

NOTES AND QUERIES

We are indebted to the following for information used in this bulletin: T. Bailey, M. Berisford, T. Blanding, R. Borst, W. Bottorff, A. Butler, M. Campbell, R. Dickens, J. Donovan, R. Epler, M. Fenn, D. Finley, W. Glick, H. Gottschalk, J. Hammond, G. Hasenauer, R. Haynes, W. Herr, W. Howarth, P. Huber, E. Johnson, J. Johnston, D. Kamen-Kaye, K. Kasegawa, H. Kittleson, W. Kunkle, N. Lester, A. McGrath, D. McWilliams, P. MacPherson, F. Moore, R. Needham, P. Oehser, C. Orr, R. Schaedle, A. Seaburg, E. Shaw, E. Teale, J. Vickers, S. Wellman, and P. Williams.

How would you like to have a nine foot by seven foot full color mural of Walden woods in your home? Nature-scapes (Box 160, Wilmette, Ill. 60091) has produced one from a photograph by Ed Cooper and we can assure you it is a beauty. You can almost smell the pines. It can be ordered postpaid for \$55.00.

The following back issues of our bulletin are available at 10 for \$1.00--12, 13, 15, 21-62, 65, 66, 69, 70, 73-79, 81-83, 85-93, 94-96, 98, 99, 101, 104-130. A reprint of bulletins 1-9 is 50¢ Booklets 5, 8, 10, 14, 22, 26 & 27 are available at 50¢ each and 6, 7, & 23 at \$1.00 each. An expanded Booklet 17 has been issued by the Univ. of Mass. Press as THOREAU IN OUR SEASON for \$4.50 and Booklet 21 as THE THOREAU CENTENNIAL is available from State Univ. of N.Y. Press for \$5.00. Bulletins 1-100 are available in hardcover from Johnson Reprint Corp., 111 Fifth Ave., NYC, 10003, for \$15.00. Microfilms of the bulletins are available from Univ. Microfilms, Ann Arbor, Mich. Your secretary has available 5x7 glossy prints of the Maxham daguerreotype, the Rowse crayon, the Dunshee ambrotype, and the Ricketson caricature of Thoreau for 50¢ each.

Two recent books by past presidents of the Thoreau Society don't directly concern themselves with Thoreau but are so filled with the Thoreauvian spirit and are such delightful reading that I would like to call them to your attention. They are Edwin Way Teale's *A NATURALIST BUYS AN OLD FARM* (Dodd, Mead) and Henry Beetle Hough's *MOSTLY ON MARTHA'S VINEYARD* (Harcourt Brace).

As Debby Simmerman and David Haas have pointed out to us, the "It is not that we love to be alone" quotation queried in TSB 130 is from Thoreau's May 21, 1855 letter to H.G.O. Blake.

Your secretary will again this summer be conducting the Concord Summer Seminars. This year it will consist of 5 one-week sessions: "Tracing Thoreau's Footsteps on Cape Cod" with field trips, June 30-July 4; "The Lives of Thoreau," July 7-11; "Thoreau's Ideas Today," July 14-18; "Thoreau's Transcendentalist Friends," July 21-25; and "Transcendental Utopias," July 28-Aug. 1. For details write your secretary.

West Virginia Wesleyan College has recently issued a spectacular recruiting poster featuring a quotation from WALDEN.

Lawrence Durrell, in his new novel *MONSTER*, says, "As Thoreau nearly said, 'Most wives lead lives of quiet desperation.'"

J. Vickers suggests to us that an appropriate quotation for the Bicentennial would be Thoreau's "But it should not be by their architecture but by their abstract thought that a nation should seek to commemorate itself." (JOUR. 4:152)